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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0371
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5512
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3180
RUCNTXD/AMEMBASSY MAJURO 0100
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2344
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4046
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5029
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0208
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2626
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3181
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1383
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1356
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1211
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001943

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/21/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: CONTINUED VOLATILITY IN PAPUA

REF: JAKARTA 1929 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Tensions continue to ratchet up in the Papua region of eastern Indonesia. Following large rallies last week, Papuans again demonstrated in Jayapura, the capital of Papua, on October 20. Police cracked down on the marchers, arresting at least 18 Papuans, including a well-known activist. Police may have already released some of those arrested. Contacts report that tensions continue to be high on October 21. Papuan activists seem to be torquing up their anti-Jakarta activities ahead of December 1, a date commemorating the raising of the Papuan "Morning Star" flag.
END SUMMARY.

ANOTHER LARGE RALLY

2. (SBU) There is continued volatility in Papua. Hundreds of Papuans demonstrated in Jayapura on October 20. The protesters were protesting against the Act of Free Choice by which Papua was integrated into the Indonesian union in 1969. They also shouted slogans against Jakarta, complaining that the GOI had not done enough to develop the region and was not truly interested in the region's situation. Rally goers also celebrated the reported meeting of some British Members of Parliament with Papuan activists in London last week.

POLICE ARREST 18 PAPUANS

3. (SBU) Contacts report that the protest proceeded in a generally peaceful manner. The police subsequently cracked down, however, and arrested 18 Papuans for possible "treason" based on their alleged roles in planning the recent rallies. (Note: In addition to the October 20 rally, large, peaceful rallies were held in several Papua locations on October 16--see reftel.) Included among those arrested was Buchtar Tabuni, who is a known anti-Jakarta activist. He has been active in condemning the Act of Free Choice for some time, for example. Buchtar allegedly has been at the forefront of organizing the recent rallies. There are reports that Buchtar and perhaps some of the other Papuans have been released, pending further questioning.

CONTINUED TENSIONS

¶4. (SBU) Contacts report continued tension in Papua as of October 21. Large numbers of police are reportedly on the streets of Jayapura and also of Nabire and Maniokwari, two other cities in the Papuan region. We have not received reports of additional rallies or of any problems. Contacts say that the situation is a bit tense, however, with many Papuans angered about the arrests.

WORKING TOWARD DECEMBER 1

¶5. (C) There is little doubt that Papuan activists are torquing up their anti-Jakarta activities ahead of December 1, a date commemorating the raising of the Papuan "Morning Star" flag in 1961. Papuans in the main clearly remain highly frustrated with the Indonesian government, feeling that not enough is being done to deal with problems in the generally poor region. The GOI seems to be generally acting with restraint. That said, it clearly is not about to allow Papuans to take to the streets and engage in separatist rhetoric. Already, some Indonesians are demanding that the government complain directly to the British government over the MPs who reportedly met with Papuan activists.

HUME